

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00724 281718Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----281740Z 090749 /43

O R 281644Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5628  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T TUNIS 0724

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)  
SUBJECT: TUNISIA INVITES SECSTATE

1. SUMMARY: ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER BRHIM TURKI  
SUMMONED ME URGENTLY TO MOFA THIS MORNING TO EXTEND GOT  
INVITATION TO SECSTATE AND PARTY TO CONSIDER STOP, HOWEVER  
BRIEF, IN TUNIS DURING FORTHCOMING TRIP TO OTHER ARAB  
CAPITALS. SEVERAL REASONS WERE MARSHALED WHY TUNIS STOPOVER  
WOULD BE JUSTIFIED. AS FALLBACK POSITION ACTING FONMIN  
SUGGESTED VISIT TO TUNIS BY HABIB OR ATHERTON BEFORE OR  
AFTER SECRETARY'S VOYAGE. I TOLD TURKI I DOUBTED IF SECSTATE'S  
ITINERARY HAD MUCH "GIVE" IN IT AS THIS LATE STAGE, BUT  
UNDERTOOK TO RELAY TUNISIAN INVITATION TO DEPARTMENT. END  
SUMMARY.

2. TURKI INFORMED ME THAT HIS REQUEST THAT I SEE HIM HAD BEEN  
SPARKED BY THE INTEREST OF THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER,  
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AS WELL AS OTHERS IN GOT, WHO HOPED DEEPLY THAT THE SECRETARY  
COULD FIND TIME TO VISIT TUNIS WHEN PROCEEDING TO OR FROM  
HIS PLANNED VISITS TO OTHER ARAB CAPITALS. TURKI CITED  
AS RATIONALE FOR SUCH A VISIT: FONMIN CHATTY (NOW  
ATTENDING ARAB-AFRICAN MEETINGS IN LUSAKA) IS CURRENT  
CHAIRMAN OF ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS; CHATTY'S WIDE  
TRAVELS DURING PERIOD OF HIS CHAIRMANSHIP FIT HIM WELL TO

PUT SECRETARY IN MIDDLE EAST PICTURE; EC-ARAB DIALOGUE WILL HAVE BEEN HELD FEB. 7- 12 IN TUNIS, WITH TUNISIA AS CO-PRESIDENT, JUST BEFORE SECRETARY'S DESIRED VISIT; AND GOT DEEPLY INVOLVED IN PLANNING FOR ARAB-AFRICAN SUMMIT MARCH 5- 7. THUS, SECRETARY WOULD FIND TUNISIAN OFFICIALS SOURCE OF IMPORTANT AND CHARACTERISTICALLY BALANCED VIEWPOINTS ON MIDDLE EAST, ARAB-AFRICAN AND ARAB-EC RELATIONSHIPS. TURKI ADMITTED THAT GOT INVITATION WAS BEING EXTENDED SOMEWHAT TARDILY, BUT FELT THAT A VISIT, HOWEVER, BRIEF, BY THE SECRETARY WOULD BE WORTH HIS WHILE.

3. I TOLD TURKI THAT I FEARED THE TUNISIAN SUGGESTION HAD COME PERHAPS TOO LATE. THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIP AND OTHER INDICATIONS AVAILABLE TO ME POINTED TO AN ITINERARY THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN WORKED OUT. I WAS AFRAID THAT THERE WOULD BE VERY LITTLE "GIVE" IF ANY, IN THE SECRETARY'S TRAVEL PLANS. I ADDED INCONFIDENCE THAT I HAD ALREADY RECEIVED AN INDICATION THAT CHIEFS OF MISSION AT OUR MAGHREB POSTS WOULD BE INVITED TO MEET WITH THE SECRETARY AT SOME POINT IN HIS ITINERARY. THIS WAS TO ME AN EVIDENCE THAT THE SECRETARY FOR THE PRESENT WAS CONFINING HIS TRAVEL TO THE "CONFRONTATION" STATES. HE PROBABLY INTENDED TO SAVE A VISIT TO THE MAGHREB FOR A LATER OCCASION. NEVERTHELESS, I SAID I WAS SURE THE SECRETARY WOULD BE HONORED WITH THE SINCERITY AND THE URGENCY OF TUNISIA'S INVITATION AND I WOULD TRANSMIT IT TO WASHINGTON AT ONCE.

4. TURKI SAID THAT HE WOULD APPRECIATE MY ENDORSEMENT OF THE INVITATION AND HOPED THAT A STOP IN TUNIS WOULD FIT INTO  
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THE SECRETARY'S PLANS. IN THE EVENT IT DID NOT, HOWEVER, AS A FALLBACK SUGGESTION HE ADSSZORZEATVRE MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT TO TUNIS BY A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE SECRETARY'S ENTOURAGE, SPECIFYING UNDER SECRETARY HABIB OR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON. I TOLD HIM I HAD NO IDEA IF A HABIB OR ATHERTON VISIT WOULD BE POSSIBLE, BUT I WOULD RELAY THIS SUGGESTION TOO TO WASHINGTON.

5. COMMENT: RECOGNIZING THAT NO SMALL PART OF GOT'S INVITATION IS MOTIVATED BY ITS STRONG DESIRE TO ESTABLISH AN EARLY AND WARM BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, THE TUNISIANS NEVERTHELESS HAVE CONSIDERABLE MERIT IN THE RATIONALE GIVEN ABOVE FOR A VISIT. I DO NOT FEEL ABLE, HOWEVER, AT THIS EARLY STAGE IN THE SECRETARY'S TENURE, WITH THE OTHER BURDENSOME DEMANDS ON HIS TIME, TO ENDORSE THIS INVITATION. I SIMPLY TRANSMIT IT TO WASHINGTON WHERE IT CAN BE WEIGHED IN LIGHT OF WASHINGTON'S BROADER PERSPECTIVES. WHETHER THIS INVITATION IS ACCEPTED OR DECLINED, I HOPE THAT I WILL BE GIVEN THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION AT AN EARLY TIME TO TRANSMIT TOGETHER WITH

A BRIEF MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM THE SECRETARY TO HIS TUNISIAN  
COUNTERPART, HABIB CHATTY,WHO IS EXPECTED TO RETURN TO TUNIS  
OVER THE WEEKEND.  
MULCAHY

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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